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SUBJECT: BRITISH PERMANENT OBSERVER APPLICATION PASSED TO
OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY: OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL ACTED MARCH 7 TO SUBMIT
GREAT BRITAIN' S APPLICATION FOR PERMANENT OBSERVERSHIP TO
GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR DECISION NEXT MONTH, ON BASIS THREE
MEMBERS' TERRITORIAL DISPUTES WITH BRITAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CAREFULLY ARRANGED SCENARIO, GREAT BRITAIN' S
APPLICATION FOR PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS WAS FORMALLY
INTRODUCED MARCH 7 IN OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL, WHICH PROMPTLY
PASSED BUCK TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON BASIS BRITAIN' S TER-
RITORIAL DISPUTES WITH THREE MEMBER COUNTRIES. SINCE PRO-
CEDURE WAS TRIGGERED AUTOMATICALLY UNDER COUNCIL' S OWN
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RULES FOR CONSIDERING PERMANENT OBSERVER APPLICANTS, NO VOTE WAS TAKEN ON MERITS OF BRITAIN'S CASE.

2. COUNCIL RES. 52 OF JANUARY 1972 PROVIDED THAT NO DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN ON APPLICATIONS FROM STATES WITH WHICH AN OAS MEMBER DECLARED IT HAD A PENDING TERRITORIAL CLAIM OR LITIGATION, BUT INSTEAD WOULD SUBMIT THESE TO ASSEMBLY FOR DECISION. IN FIRST APPLICATION OF THIS PROVISION, GUATEMALA, VENEZUELA, AND ARGENTINA LINED UP YESTERDAY TO DECLARE AGAINST BRITAIN AND CALL FOR PRESENTING CASE, UNDER BARE- BONES REPORT, TO ASSEMBLY WITHOUT FURTHER COUNCIL DEBATE. ONLY DISCUSSION CENTERED ON WHETHER REPORT SHOULD GO INTO DETAILS OF OBJECTIONS AND/ OR MAGNITUDE OF BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO OAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, AND WHETHER IT SHOULD STRESS TOPIC'S " URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE" (AS RECOMMENDED BY U. S.).

3. CURIOUS EXCEPTION WAS POSITION TAKEN BY VENEZUELA, WHOSE REP (GARCIA BUSTILLOS) HAD DIFFICULTY ESTABLISHING PLAUSIBLE GROUNDS FOR " TERRITORIAL DISPUTE" WITH GREAT BRITAIN. APART FROM GUYANA QUESTION, HE SAID, VENEZUELA ALSO TOOK EXCEPTION TO BRITAIN AS ONLY MAJOR POWER WITH COLONIES IN THIS HEMISPHERE-- A FACT WHICH VENEZUELA, AS MEMBER OF U. N. DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE, COULD NOT OVERLOOK. GARCIA BUSTILLOS BACKTRACKED ON THIS POINT, HOWEVER, WHEN AMB. JOVA (U. S.) CHALLENGED ITS VALIDITY AS CRITERION FOR OBSERVERSHIP AND POINTED TO BRITAIN'S GOOD RECORD ON DECOLONIZATION. ARGENTINA TOOK STRONGER POSITION IN OPPOSITION THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED, STATING THAT GREAT BRITAIN IF ADMITTED AS AN OBSERVER MIGHT CLAIM TO REPRESENT MALVINAS AND OTHER DISPUTED TERRITORIES IN OAS FORUMS AND THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO MEMBER COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN DISPUTES.

4. QUESTION WILL NEXT COME UP AT PRELIMINARY MEETING OF OASGA, WHERE DELEGATES MUST DECIDE BY TWO- THIRDS VOTE WHETHER IT IS " URGENT AND IMPORTANT" ENOUGH TO ADD TO ASSEMBLY AGENDA.

5. COMMENT: FROM OUR STANDPOINT (AND THAT OF BRITISH), OUTCOME WAS RELATIVELY SATISFACTORY. WE HAD FEARED WORSE, SINCE GUATEMALA HAD EARLIER LAID PARLIAMENTARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GROUNDWORK FOR DELAYING ACTION. HOWEVER, FACT THAT

ARGENTINA AND VENEZUELA HAVE EXPRESSED SUCH STRONG
OPPOSITION MAY SIGNIFY ROUGH WEATHER AHEAD. ARGENTINE
AMBASSADOR QUIJANO TOLD JOVA PRIVATELY THAT A RE-
CENT INTERRUPTION OF SMOOTH PROGRESS ON FALKLAND ISLAND
NEGOTIATIONS HAD AROUSED IRE OF ARGENTINE GOVT AND HE HAD
RECEIVED URGENT INSTRUCTIONS FROM BUENOS AIRES TO TAKE
STRONG STAND AGAINST BRITISH. THIS FACTOR HAD ALSO PARTLY
MOTIVATED ARGENTINA'S OPPOSITION TO PORTUGAL ON PREVIOUS
DAY AS IT MADE IT EASIER TO OPPOSE " COLONIALISTS". ROGERS

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